

On Vengeance Height

A Play in One Act

BY

ALLAN DAVIS

HV2345

D29



AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.

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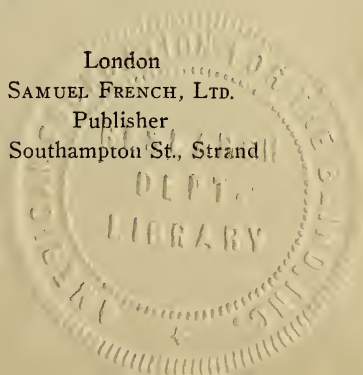
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ON VENGEANCE HEIGHT

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FIRST PRODUCED AT THE VAGABOND THEATRE
BALTIMORE, MD., FEB. 2, 1920, WITH THE
FOLLOWING CAST OF CHARACTERS:

CHERIDAH GORMLEY.....Edmonia Nolley
HOPE.....Sonia Whitman
LEM CARMALT.....Clapham Murray, Jr.
CLAYPatrick Riley

SCENE: *A cabin in the Tennessee Mountains.*
Thirty years ago.
October. Evening.

On Vengeance Height

(*Right and Left are from the point of view of the actor.*)

SCENE.—*The cabin of the Gormleys in the Tennessee mountains. Everything primitive.*

The heavy door is in the centre of the rear wall, and to the right and left of it are small windows. In the right wall, towards the front, an open fireplace with crane, kettle, and other implements. On the left, a rude framework supporting a pallet covered with dark gray blankets and a bear robe. At the further end of this bed, ladder-like steps rising from the floor to a trap-door in the low ceiling, leading to the loft.

A log settle stands out in the cabin at the upper end of the fireplace. In front of the fireplace, a spinning-wheel and chair. A rough pine table and two chairs, made of scantling, at the centre. A single shelf in the centre of the room hung from the low, unhewn beam which runs from left to right across the room. A rifle over the chimney piece. Pelts. Brushwood, kindling, and logs.

It is mid-October. Evening. A fire under the kettle.

As the curtain rises, it discloses CHERIDAH GORMLEY (GRAM) spinning. She is past sixty and blind, but vigorous with the wiry strength

of the mountain people. The door, which swings inward to the left, is open. Through it, a last crimson ray of the setting sun falls upon the woman, showing her face as that of one whose elemental nature has become softened and spiritualized by loneliness and grief.

The ray fades, disappears Twilight upon the mountains.

The woman spins and hums. As the twilight deepens, she sings the words of the hymn.

GRAM.

"O Thou fr'm Whom all goodness flows,
I lif' my soul ter Thee;
In all my sorrers, conflic's, woes,
Dear Lord, remember me."

(She stops abruptly and listens. Then, before anybody appears—challengingly)

Who's thar? Who's thar, I say? *(Brightly)*
That yo', Hope? *(Bustling, as she rises)* Come in,
child, come in.

HOPE TAVENDER. *(Entering with a basket—a young mountain woman, barefoot and in homespun)*
Seems like yo' could hear a robin a-hoppin' on th'
sof' grass, th' way yo' know who's a-comin', Gram.
Seems like yo' could mos' see.

GRAM. *(Pleased)* When th' Lord takes one
thing, he gives anuther. My hearin' gits better'n'
better. *(As she feels her way to the center)* Whar
air ye, child?

HOPE. *(Putting her basket upon the table)* Hyar.

GRAM. *(Taking her hands—motherly)* Light th'
lantern, an' set down. Yo' mus' be ti-erd. *(Sitting
right of table as HOPE goes to the fireplace with
the lantern)* Yo're the workingest gal in these hyar

hills, Hope. An' yo' mus'n't come way over hyar so of'en jes' fur me.

HOPE. (*As she lights the lantern with a sliver of kindling*) W'en my pore mammy war a-dyin', didn' yo' come way down t'our cabin in all weathers nights, t' keer fer her? My pap he don't fergit hit even ef he is old and cain't come hisself.

GRAM. (*As HOPE rises and crosses back of her to the head of the table*) Yo'r mammy war my neighbor. Hit pleased me.

HOPE. (*Almost sharply*) Wall, yo're my neighbor, and hit pleasures me now. (*In a milder tone*) I've fotched yo' some shortened bread I jes' baked, an' some quinces fur jelly. They's all peeled an' ready. An' hyar's some chinquapins and pawpaws. They's jes' right now.

GRAM. (*Gratefully*) Yo' do more'n ketch my chickens an' do my chores an' fotch me corn pone an' quinces an' chinquapins an' paw-paws, Hope. Yo' fotch me yerself w'en hit's lonely, an' yer voice w'en hit's a-quiet. . . . The days air long an' always—black. I set a-listenin' fur 'th' owls ter hoot so's I'll know w'en night comes. (*With a change*) I dunno whut I'd a done without ye, sence Clay done went away t' l'arn.

HOPE. Hit won't be so lonesome fer yo' w'en he comes back.

GRAM. (*With hurried evasion*) Oh, I hain't in no hurry fur Clay t' come back. No hurry 't all.

HOPE. (*Thoughtfully*) He mus' be purty near ter growed up now.

GRAM. (*Anxiously*) Growed up? W'y he's jes' a child.

HOPE. He's sixteen.

GRAM. Whut's sixteen? 'Tain't nuthin' but a boy, that's what he is—nuthin' but a little boy.

HOPE. Been gone six years, hain't he?

GRAM. (*Uneasily*) Yas—sence his father war shot.

HOPE. The men at the Gap war a-sayin'—
(*Catches herself up*)

GRAM. (*Quickly, but with difficulty*) Whut war they a-sayin'?

HOPE. Oh, nuthin'— (*Attempting to change the subject*) Is thar ennything I kin do hyar fur yo', Gram, afore I go?

GRAM. Yo' hain't good at keepin' things back, Hope. Whut war th' men down ter the Gap a-sayin'?

HOPE. (*Sullenly*) Nothin'.

GRAM. (*Sharply—with authority*) Whut war they a-sayin', I axed? (*Pause—strongly*) I'm a-waitin' fer ter hear.

HOPE. Well, they sez ez how yo're a-keepin' Clay from comin' back.

GRAM. (*Glibly*) O' course I'm a-keepin' him fr'm comin' back. Ev'rybody knows that. I want him ter git some l'arnin' afore he's growed up an' too old.

HOPE. (*Slowly*) They sez hit's 'cause yo're scairt.

GRAM. (*Springing to her feet, aroused*) Who sez that? Scairt? (*Walking up and down wrathfully*) Me, Cheridah Gormley, scairt? Ev'rybody in these hyar mountains knows how scairt I am. (*With proud laughter*) Scairt am I? Scairt!—w'en I killed Bryce Carmalt with my own hands. (*With a change*) Gowd fergive me my wicked pride! Gowd fergive me my sins! (*With a cry*) Hope—air you thar?

HOPE. Yas.

GRAM. Kem hyar. (*HOPE goes to her—the older woman clings to her*) Hope, I am scairt. I hain't never tole nobody before, but it's Gowd's truth an'

it's always with me—a-watchin' me. (*Tremblingly*)
I'm scairt—I'm scairt.

HOPE. (*Soothing her*) I know how yo're feelin'.

GRAM. (*Swaying backward and forward—in a dead voice*) No, yo' don' know. Nobody c'u'd know leas' she'd been thro' it—nobody. (*Pause*)
Is it dark yet outside, Hope?

HOPE. Thar's a little light.

GRAM. Go t' the winder an' look out—t' th' left.
(*Hope does so*) Thar's Vengeance Height . . . ?

HOPE. Yas.

GRAM. Y' see somethin' 'ginst the sky?

HOPE. (*Suspecting what's coming*) O' course.

GRAM. Some boulders 'bout's high's a man?

HOPE. (*Sympathetically*) Yas. But don't make
me count 'em agen.

GRAM. Count 'em.

HOPE. (*Unwillingly*) I know how many thar
air, Gram.

GRAM. (*Firmly*) Count 'em.

HOPE. Well, jest because ye want me to. . . .
Startin' fr'm th' fur side—thar's one—

GRAM. (*At the center, interrupting, her sightless eyes gazing before her*) Thar's whar my man Zeke's buried. 'Twar twenty year back. Er old sow of ourn had done strayed away through a hole in the pen, an' the Carmalts they claimed hit. The Carmalts—how I disgust that name!—Zeke went over t' see 'em 'bout it—friendly like. One thing led to 'nuther—thar war high words—an' old Jim Carmalt—he shot Zeke—he shot him fr'm behin', without warnin' an' without a-givin' him a chance. . . . My Zeke—my man Zeke. . . . (*Living through it again*) I 'member w'en they fotched him thro' that door, an' I turned down the kiver of that thar bed fer him, an' they laid him on it, an' I tuk th' lint rags fr'm this shelf an' wropped him, and

watched him an' watched. But the mornin' o' th' next day, when it was a-gittin' gray thro' the winders, an' the mockin' birds was a-whistlin' an' th' cuckoos a-callin' an' the peckerwoods a-tappin', an' ev'rything was beginnin' agin outside—he died. (*With grim but shaking interrogation*) Thar's an'uther boulder beside that one, hain't thar?

HOPE. Y-a-s.

GRAM. That's Jeff—my fust born. He killed Jim Carmalt as kilt his pap; an' then Bryce Carmalt killed *him*. (*Pause—intensely*) Go on a-countin'—

HOPE. (*With difficulty*) Three-four—

GRAM. Them's my boys Steve and Tolliver. They war a-swimmin' one evenin' in Black Pool, an' Lem Carmalt, he shot 'em both, an' they died—in th' water—— (*HOPE turns away with a shudder. Pressing her*) Why hain't yo' a-countin'?

HOPE. I—I—cain't.

GRAM. Yo' cain't count 'em, but I buried 'em, an' I kin count 'em. . . . Th' nex' is five. . . . That war my boy Tom. He accounted fur *two* o' th' Carmalts afore they got him. . . . An' when he war a-dyin', I tole him he done well, an' he went out a-smilin'. (*Pause—less strongly*) An' the nex' is six . . . my boy Cliff—Clay's pappy. A mammy loves all her boys, but I reckon I loved Cliff mos'—he hed curly chestnut hair an' war allers bright an' smilin', an'—oh, he war jes'—*Cliff*. . . . He war a-takin' me ter th' Gap. Hit war 'bout this time o' year. The milkweed pods war a-bustin' an' thar war asters, an' barberry bresh red's a flannel shirt in th' woods, an' a power o' golden-rods a shinin' clean an' yaller. How good I c'u'd see in them days—how good I c'u'd see! . . . I wuz on hoss-back behin' Cliff, an' he war a-singin'. Then sudden a turkey-buzzar' riz up a-tween the hoss's hoofs—an'

afore I c'u'd even think how bad a sign it wuz, Lem Carmalt an' two more of 'em done fired at us. . . . Cliff got one of them—an' then—they shot Cliff—an' w'en I see him layin' theer so still, I tuk his Winchester an' shot Bryce Carmalt— (*Pause—slowly*) An' then Lem Carmalt he fired at me—an'—I lost my eyes. (*Simply—as if summing it all up*) An' thar war six boulders on Vengeance Height, in our plot, an' five in th' Carmalt's plot—an' me. (*With a change*) That's why w'en th' circuit rider axed me t' give him Clay t' take to school w'en he war ten year old, I let him go. That's why I've kep' him away these six years—t' keep him safe. . . . (*With an outcry of stifled grief and loneliness*) D' you reckon I relish my little gran'-son t' be away? D' you reckon I relish t' live hyar all alone, blin' an' helpless? But I'm a-gittin' old. I cain't stand things ez I could. . . . Clay's all I got, and I'm scairt fur him—scairt o' that rattlesnake Lem Carmalt as killed my boys Steve an' Tolliver an' Cliff an' tuk away my sight—I'm scairt . . . I'm scairt. . . .

HOPE. (*With mountain philosophy*) Clay's a man. He'll hev t' take up the war.

GRAM. Yo're young an' yo're hard. Whut d' you know 'bout a war that yo' kin talk so easy? Yo' hain't hed twenty years of it. Twenty years back hit begun—twenty years hit hez lasted . . . bitter years—dark years. . . . One by one they kem thro' that door. One by one they laid on that pallet-bed, an' I watched over 'em—all but Cliff—an' one by one they died—an' Cliff he died, too. . . . The war! Ef hit mus' go on, lemme die fust, dear Gowd, lemme die fust!

HOPE. (*Kneels on floor beside her*) I am young, an' hard, an' I don' know—I'm sorry, Gram, sorry I talked that-a-way. W'y, Lem Carmalt hain't been

seen hyar fer months. He mus' be gone away. Maybe he's gone fer good.

GRAM. (*Hopefully*) D' yo' reckon?

HOPE. I'm shore.

GRAM. (*Rising and embracing the girl*) Oh, ye air a good gal, Hope. . . . I wish I c'u'd see yo'. . . . Ye war sech a little thing w'en my eyes saw las'. (*Pause, while she passes her finger tips over the girl's features*) Yo' favor yer mammy—(*HOPE kisses her impulsively. Moved—*) Why, Hope! (*Pause. . . . The owls hoot outside*) Thar's the owls a-hootin'. (*Gently*) Ye better be a-goin' back afore hit gits too late.

HOPE. (*Putting some brushwood on the fire*) Kin I take th' lantern?

GRAM. Why, shorely. Whut good's er lantern ter me?

HOPE. I'll be over t'morrer.

GRAM. Y' air always welcome.

HOPE. Night.

GRAM. Night.

(*HOPE swings off through the door and to the left. The fire burns up a little—GRAM hums and spins once more. As she does so, LEM CARMALT, a man well over six feet tall, a powerful, grizzled creature in homespun and blue shirt, and carrying a rifle, comes to the door with the craft and silence of a woodsman, and stands there watching her intently*) .

GRAM. (*Stopping suddenly*) Someone's in this room. (*Pause*) Who is it? (*With increasing uneasiness*) I know yo're thar. Who is it? (*Wildly*) Who is it, I say?

LEM. (*Grimly quiet—without moving*) Who d' yer reckon hit is?

GRAM. (*Cries out, leaping to her feet*) Lem—Carmalt! Lem . . . Carmalt!!

LEM. (*Sharply*) That thar's my name, an' ye be mighty respec'ful ez how ye speak hit.

GRAM. (*Breathless*) Y-You—! Y-y-ou! How dar' ye set foot hyar in my cabin?

LEM. (*Grimly*) Yer door's open.

GRAM. Hain't ye th' scum o' th' yearth ter kem hyar like this, a-knowin' I'm 'lone! Whut fer air ye hyar?

LEM. Whut fer am I hyar? I'm hyar fer ter welcome Clay.

GRAM. (*Mystified*) C-Clay . . . he hain't hyar.

LEM. I done heerd tell of a young lookin' stranger t'other side o' th' Gap. Jinny Wilkins—th' half wit—she said ez he war a-huntin' quail—an' he looked like Clay. So I kem ter welcome him laiike I welcomed three other Gormleys afore him.

GRAM. (*White to the lips*) Gowd—Gowd! (*Suddenly turning to him*) Lem, ye said ye done killed three Gormleys?

LEM. (*Proudly*) Yas. Yer Tom, he got two of ourn, but I got three o' yourn—I did—three—they was Steve an' Tolliver an' Cliff. (*Fondling his gunstock*) Thar's the notches.

GRAM. (*Almost beside herself*) Yas. . . . An' thar's six o' ourn gone, an' I'm good's daid. Say seven o' ourn an' on'y five o' yo'rn. So far yo're side's ahead, hain't hit, Lem?

LEM. (*Grimly toneless*) Waal, I reckon.

GRAM. (*Suddenly*) Lem, let's call hit off.

LEM. Whut?

GRAM. The war. I hain't got many more years ter live. I'll soon be gone. Thar's on'y Clay and you lef'. Live out yer years, Lem; let him live out hisn. (*With a struggle*) I'll take th' shame o' th' Gormleys a-bein' beaten. Let's say quits.

LEM. I swore I wouldn't put back my rifle-gun while thar war a Gormley a-livin'.

GRAM. Then ye swore murder. (*A movement from LEM*) Yas, I said murder. Afore I got r'ligion, I didn' reckon it that-a-way, but shore's Gowd's up thar a-lookin' down on us, hit's murder. D' you think He wants yo' to keep an oath like that?

LEM. I said I'd do it, an' I'm a-goin' t'.

GRAM. A' right, an' suppose ye do it. Suppose ye git Clay th' way ye got th' uthers, an' I die too, an' all th' Gormleys air gone, and yo're lef', jes' yo', Lem Carmalt. Yo'll sit on yo'r chair in front o' th' fire, and yo'll hol' yer rifle-gun t' yo' an' feel o' the *four* notches cut on th' stock, an' yo' think yo'll be happy then, Lem, don't ye? Yo' think yo'll be happy?

LEM. (*Transported*) Yas—I'll be happy. I'll be a-restin' thar an' a-thinkin' how I cleaned 'em up. Hit'll be th' sweetest hour of my life.

GRAM. Hit'll be the bitterest, 'cause yo'll know four men is a-standin' up afore their Maker an' a-p'intin' down ter yo'. Each one of 'em a-p'intin' t' yo' and each one a-sayin', "Thar's Lem Carmalt as killed me." An' thar'll be thunder an' lightnin' in yer heart, an' th' face o' Gowd a-burnin' in yer face. . . . That's how yo'll be happy, Lem.

LEM. Y' cain't move me with that thar talk. I know whut I'm a-goin' ter do.

GRAM. (*In desperation*) Y' cain't git Clay. He's too fur from hyar.

LEM. I'll hunt him out. Should ha' done it long ago.

GRAM. (*As a last effort*) Ef I cain't make yo' listen fur th' sake o' th' Word, listen fur th' sake o' yer pride. Ef yo' kill Clay, yo' on'y kill a boy, an' whut'll th' mountains say t' that? (*Imploringly*) Wait till he's a man, Lem, wait till he's a man.

LEM. Leave him so's he kin git me? He's old enough t' pull a trigger. (*With a haunted look*) Somethin' keeps a-tellin' me t' watch out fur him. Th' las' six months, somethin' keeps a-sayin', "He'll git yo' onless yo' git him fust." So I'm *a-goin'* ter git him.

GRAM. (*Frantically*) Lem, leave Clay alone. Think o' me, Lem, hev pity on me. Clay's all I got lef'. Hain't I suffered enough? Hain't yo' had satisfaction enough?

LEM. (*Thunderously*) No! An' I'll never hev enough. Ef yo've seed yo'r man an' yo'r boys die, I've seed my pap an' my brothers die—shot down by yo'rn. Ef you've been misruble—wot of me?—a-slinkin' aroun' on th' hills like a wild animal—a-sleepin' with my eyes an' ears open—a-listenin' t' ev'ry leaf—a-watchin' ev'ry shadder. Gowd, th' life I've hed!

GRAM. Not in th' las' six years.

LEM. Wall, hit's beginnin' ag'in, an' I cain't rest. But w'en th' Gormleys is done, then I'll rest well.

GRAM. (*Enraged*) Ef I could only git yo' myself. . . . Ef I could only see long enough fur one shot at yer pizen heart!

LEM. You'll never glint 'long th' sights on a gun bar'l ag'in, y' ole she devil.

GRAM. (*Facing him—her eyes upturned*) Hain't yo' proud o' yer wurk?—Look at hit—look— (*Taking hold of him and thrusting her blind face into his eyes*) Now th' nex' time yo' sight along yo'r gun—'stead o' seein' Clay, see these eyes in front o' yo'. See 'em always—in yo'r cabin, an' w'en yo' go out—in th' darkness an' th' rain an' th' bright sunlight an' in mornin' an' at night—always in front o' yo'. An' w'en yo'r finger te'ches th' trigger, feel hit slippy with th' blood o' th' men yo'r

murderin' han's hev killed, an' shoot wide o' the mark, Lem, shoot wide o' the mark.

LEM. (*Shaken—Savagely*) Shet up, I say! Hold yer jaw!

GRAM. (*Borne along*) An' now git out of hyar. A Carmalt y' air, an' a Carmalt yo'll die—a polecat like all th' uther polecats—yer kin!

LEM. (*Furiously*) Yo' leave my name alone or by—

GRAM. (*Scornfully*) Why don't yo' shoot? I ain't afeerd o' yo'.

LEM. (*With a rough push rather than blow, sending her sprawling onto the floor*) Ye hain't worth shootin'. (*At the door—quietly*) An' look hyar—ef I ketch yo' out on th' trail, I'll jes' finish the work I begun six years ago. (*In his grimly quiet, almost colorless tone*) Blin' ole cat. (*He goes out*)

(*Gasping and quaking with excitement, and with inarticulate cries of pain and impotent rage, GRAM rises, hurries as quickly as she can to the door, bangs it to and bars it, and puts up the wooden shutters and bars them. As she is moving away from them to the table, she throws her head back as if listening to something overhead. The trap-door opens, and the face of a dark-haired boy appears in the opening.*)

CLAY. (*Softly, at the trap-door*) Gram.

GRAM. (*To herself*) Hit hain't true. I'm jes' a-hearin' hit.

CLAY. Gram, don' you hear me? (*He hurries down the ladder. A tall, handsome young boy of sixteen, in corduroys—a rifle slung over his shoulder. He carries a few quail and some wild flowers*)

GRAM. (*Overjoyed, yet not believing her senses*) Is it?— Is it? . . .

CLAY. Yas, Gram.

GRAM. Hit's Clay!

CLAY. Yas, hit's me.

GRAM. (*Embracing him*) My boy, my little boy Clay—my little boy Clay.

CLAY. (*Importantly*) I'm not little enny mo', Gram.

GRAM. (*Smiling*) Shorely not. Yo're quite a man.

CLAY. (*Pleased. Slips off his rifle and puts it upon the table*) Yas . . . an' I reckoned 'twas 'bout time I got home t' do somethin' fo' you. So I borrowed the circuit rider's ol' critter Colonel—funniest ol' hoss y' ever did see—an' I tuk my rifle-gun and came over th' hills. Look what I've brought you.

GRAM. (*Touching them*) Some pa'tridges.

CLAY. Yas. Y'ought ter see me shoot 'em. Plink—on th' wing, too—an' they drap daid. Circuit rider sed ef I knew my Bible's well's I knew how t' shoot, I'd be better off. But I tole him shootin' come natch'l an' th' Bible didn't. (*Pleasantly*) Hyar's white everlastin' an' some evenin' primroses I found on th' way. They looked laike drops o' snow an' yeller sunshine on th' black mountains. (*Remembering her blindness*) Oh! . . .

GRAM. Don' mind, Clay. I like ter know w'en things look purty. But how'd yo' get in?

CLAY. I wanted to surprise yo', so I tethered ol' Colonel down in th' dip—and came over my ol' secret trail, and up through the holler tree jes' outside thar—an' 'cross th' branch right into th' lof' window. Oh, it's gran' gettin' back into th' hills and among the pines again.

GRAM. Don' ye want somethin' t' eat?

CLAY. No. I stopped at th' Wilkins cabin, an' ole man Wilkins he give me somethin' t' eat.

GRAM. (*Fear gripping her as she thinks of LEM*) Did Jinny Wilkins see yo'?

CLAY. Yas—o' course—but wherefo' yo' say it that-a-way—"Jinny Wilkins"?

GRAM. Why, I done said it nachally. I don't mean nuthin' by it. . . Come hyar, Clay—set beside me and tell me whut you've l'arned. Kin yo' read an' write some?

CLAY. (*Troubled*) Yas—I ain't thinkin' 'bout that. What makes ye ac' so quare, Gram?

GRAM. Nuthin', nuthin' 't all. What's quare, except bein' so glad t' see yo'?

CLAY. Yo' don' ac' glad. Yo' ac' scairt laike.

GRAM. Why should I be scairt?

CLAY. I dunno. (*Looks round puzzled*) Why'd yo' bar th' doors an' winders? People in th' mountains don' bar their door.

GRAM. (*Evasively*) I'm 'lone. Somebody might come in.

CLAY. (*Suspiciously*) I thought I seen somebody go out'n that door when I was a-comin' over my ol' trail. I caught sight o' his shadder. Who was it, Gram? . . .

GRAM. Jes' ol' man Tavender.

CLAY. Seemed bigger'n ol' man Tavender.

GRAM. (*With dignity*) I said 't war ol' man Tavender, Clay.

CLAY. (*Sullenly*) Maybe I was wrong, but hit didn' seem like— (*The far scream of a horse in pain breaks his speech*)

CLAY. What's that? Why, hit's ol' Colonel! Pore critter, he's hurt hisself! (*He starts for the door*)

GRAM. (*Terror-stricken*) Hit hain't Colonel, Clay.

CLAY. Yes, 'tis.

GRAM. No, 'tain't, Clay. I tell yo' 'tain't—I know!

CLAY. (*Positively*) He's hurt—y' cain't fergit the screamin' of a hawss once you've heard it. I know that's Colonel.

GRAM. Don' go, Clay!

CLAY. Why not?

GRAM. Maybe somebody's a-hurtin' him a-purpose.

CLAY. (*Smiling*) Why, who'd hurt a hawss a-purpose—'less it was a Carma— (*The truth dawns on him—slowly*) It's Lem Carmalt!

GRAM. (*Pause—slowly*) Yas, Clay. He's been hyar t'night. He's a-waitin' t' kill yo'.

CLAY. Hyar! Lem Carmalt hyar! An' now he's hurtin' that pore ol' beast— (*He goes for his rifle. GRAM seizes him*) Lemme go—lemme go, I say! I got to git that thar snake!

GRAM. Don' go, Clay, fur my sake, don' go! Lem an' his hev taken all I hed. He'll take you now.

CLAY. I jes' pint blank got tuh go, Gram.

GRAM. (*Beseechingly*) Listen to me, Clay. I need yo', Clay. I'm ol'—so ol'—so full of sorrers. Don' make hit wuss fur me. . . . Don' go—my boy—my own boy—don' go!

CLAY. I'll do ennything else fur yo, Gram, but this I cain't.

GRAM. He'll kill yo th' way he killed th' others, an' they'll lay yo' on that pallet-bed th' way they laid the— (*Breaks off—pushing the vision away from her*) I couldn't stan' hit, Clay. Hit would kill me. I cain't stand hit no more. The war's broke me! Ef I lose you, whut'll I hev left? Think o' me, Clay, think o' me—

CLAY. I do think o' yo', Gram. Whut good 'd I be t' yo' ef ye knowed I war a coward?

GRAM. I won't never think it.

CLAY. Then all Vengeance Height'll think it, and

that won't save me neither. Coward or no, ef I stay here or no, he'll kill me fust chance he gits. I got t' take my chance with him. I jes' haffter do it.

GRAM. Wait—wait—a leetle while—jes' a leetle while. He's a man growed, born an' raised on these mount'ins. He knows ev'ry stone an' bresh. Yo've been away. Wait till yo've got a better chance 'g'inst him.

CLAY. (*Proudly*) I kin shoot's good's him.

GRAM. Hain't all yer l'arnin' teached ye better'n t' go out a-shootin' an' a-bein' shot at?

CLAY. (*Civilization dropping from him*) Whut's l'arnin' w'en yo' got t' kill a man? (GRAM suddenly snatches his rifle and stands with her back to the door)

GRAM. Yo're not a-goin'.

CLAY. I'm not a-goin' that-a-way, but the way I came. I'll creep through the lof' winder an' down th' holler tree an' thro' the grass like a snake. I'd be willin t' be a snake t' get him.

GRAM. (*Frantically*) Yo're not a-goin', I say!

CLAY. (*With a new dignity*) Thar's a Carmalt out thar, Gram.

GRAM. Yas.

CLAY. Yo' know what they-uns done t' us.

GRAM. (*The word being wrung from her*) Ya-a-s.

CLAY. Yo' killed one of 'em yo'self.

GRAM. Y-a-s.

CLAY. Then gimme that rifle-gun an' tell me t' go th' way y' tole yer sons ter go——

GRAM. (*After an intense inward struggle, straightens out—and gives him the rifle*) Yo' air the son of my sons. Go an' God keep yer eye cl'ar an' yer han' steady! (*He mounts the ladder and disappears. The moment after he has left the room, GRAM flings out her arms and uncontrollably breaks into passionate prayer*) Gowd A'mighty, save him

from th' hand o' that mis'ruble houn' a-waitin' fer him in th' dusk o' this night. Don' let him pay in his young innercence fer the sins o' his fathers, fer th' enemies they made, fer the blood they shed. Here 'm I—an ol', helpless woman—but don' cast me off—listen t' me in my trubble an' hev marcy on me! Take me 'stead o' him, O Lord! I ain't wuth a mite, but his whole life's ahead, an' he's got l'arnin'—what cain't he do. I ain't selfish 'nuff t' want him an' me both spared. Ef it mus' be one t' be taken t'night, Lord Gowd A'mighty, let it be me!

(Two shots ring out; a third; after a pause a fourth)

GRAM. *(With a stifled shriek, rushes blindly to the door, flings back the bar, and calls wildly)* Clay! *(She waits)* Clay—Clay!! *(Silence)* Clay, don't yo' hear me? Hit's Gram, hit's yo'r ol' gran'mother who loves yo'. Are yo' hurt, my little boy? Just say a word, one word, just say *Gram*, an' I'll know where yo' air, an' I'll come to yo' an' help yo'. . . . Clay, Clay . . . he's a-layin' out there, and I cain't go t' him . . . Yo' that are a-settin' up there a-watchin' me in my blindness with Yo'r everlastin' Eyes, ef Yo' caint' put seein' back in these spoiled eyeballs, make my hearin' sharp, sharp as Yo'r sword that's a cuttin' my heart, so's I'll hear him ef he's a-callin', an' know that he's alive. *(Her whole body seems to listen with a fierce intensity)* I don' hear nothin' . . . He's daid. *(She bursts into sobs. Her frame shaking, she walks to the couch, falls on her knees beside it, and weeps.—Composing herself stoically, she rises, turns down the bear robe and blankets, and arranges the pallet as if to receive a wounded man. Then*

she feels her way to the table, reaches up to the hanging shelf, takes down a broad roll of linen, and stands there tearing it into bandages. The tears rolling down her cheeks, she murmurs, "CLAY, CLAY.")

CLAY. (*Now a pale, stern man, comes to the doorway from the right*) I done got him, Gram. He's daid.

GRAM. (*Throwing out her arms, beating her hands together, and in infinite pride, satisfaction, and ecstasy raising her shrill song of triumph*) He's daid—he's daid—Lem Carmalt's daid! My Clay, he killed him!

CURTAIN.

BILLETED.

A comedy in 3 acts, by F. Tennison Jesse and H. Harwood. 4 males, 5 females. One easy interior scene. A charming comedy, constructed with uncommon skill, and abounds with clever lines. Margaret Anglin's big success. Amateurs will find this comedy easy to produce and popular with all audiences.

Price, 60 Cents.

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

A comedy in 3 acts. By James Montgomery. 5 males, 6 females. Costumes, modern. Two interior scenes. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Is it possible to tell the absolute truth—even for twenty-four hours? It is—at least Bob Bennett, the hero of "Nothing But the Truth," accomplished the feat. The bet he made with his business partners, and the trouble he got into—with his partners, his friends, and his fiancée—this is the subject of William Collier's tremendous comedy hit. "Nothing But the Truth" can be whole-heartedly recommended as one of the most sprightly, amusing and popular comedies that this country can boast.

Price, 60 Cents.

IN WALKED JIMMY.

A comedy in 4 acts, by Minnie Z. Jaffa. 10 males, 2 females (although any number of males and females may be used as clerks, etc.) Two interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The thing into which Jimmy walked was a broken-down shoe factory, when the clerks had all been fired, and when the proprietor was in serious contemplation of suicide.

Jimmy, nothing else but plain Jimmy, would have been a mysterious figure had it not been for his matter-of-fact manner, his smile and his everlasting humanness. He put the shoe business on its feet, won the heart of the girl clerk, saved her erring brother from jail, escaped that place as a permanent boarding house himself, and foiled the villain.

Clean, wholesome comedy with just a touch of human nature, just a dash of excitement and more than a little bit of true philosophy make "In Walked Jimmy" one of the most delightful of plays. Jimmy is full of the religion of life, the religion of happiness and the religion of helpfulness, and he so permeates the atmosphere with his "religion" that everyone is happy. The spirit of optimism, good cheer, and hearty laughter dominates the play. There is not a dull moment in any of the four acts. We strongly recommend it.

Price, 60 Cents.

MARTHA BY-THE-DAY.

An optimistic comedy in three acts, by Julie M. Lippmann, author of the "Martha" stories. 5 males, 5 females. Three interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

It is altogether a gentle thing, this play. It is full of quaint humor, old-fashioned, homely sentiment, the kind that people who see the play will recall and chuckle over tomorrow and the next day.

Miss Lippmann has herself adapted her very successful book for stage service, and in doing this has selected from her novel the most telling incidents, infectious comedy and homely sentiment for the play, and the result is thoroughly delightful.

Price, 60 Cents.

(The Above Are Subject to Royalty When Produced)

THE REJUVENATION OF AUNT MARY.

The famous comedy in three acts, by Anne Warner. 7 males, 6 females. Three interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

This is a genuinely funny comedy with splendid parts for "Aunt Mary," "Jack," her lively nephew; "Lucinda," a New England ancient maid of all work; "Jack's" three chums; the Girl "Jack" loves; "Joshua," Aunt Mary's hired man, etc.

"Aunt Mary" was played by May Robson in New York and on tour for over two years, and it is sure to be a big success wherever produced. We strongly recommend it. Price, 60 Cents.

MRS. BUMSTEAD-LEIGH.

A pleasing comedy, in three acts, by Harry James Smith, author of "The Tailor-Made Man." 6 males, 6 females. One interior scene. Costumes modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

Mr. Smith chose for his initial comedy the complications arising from the endeavors of a social climber to land herself in the altitude peopled by hyphenated names—a theme permitting innumerable complications, according to the spirit of the writer.

This most successful comedy was toured for several seasons by Mrs. Fiske with enormous success. Price, 60 Cents.

MRS. TEMPLE'S TELEGRAM.

A most successful farce in three acts, by Frank Wyatt and William Morris. 5 males, 4 females. One interior scene stands throughout the three acts. Costumes modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

"Mrs. Temple's Telegram" is a sprightly farce in which there is an abundance of fun without any taint of impropriety or any element of offence. As noticed by Sir Walter Scott, "Oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive!"

There is not a dull moment in the entire farce, and from the time the curtain rises until it makes the final drop the fun is fast and furious. A very exceptional farce. Price, 60 Cents.

THE NEW CO-ED.

A comedy in four acts, by Marie Doran, author of "Tempest and Sunshine," etc. Characters, 4 males, 7 females, though any number of boys and girls can be introduced in the action of the play. One interior and one exterior scene, but can be easily played in one interior scene. Costumes modern. Time, about 2 hours.

The theme of this play is the coming of a new student to the college, her reception by the scholars, her trials and final triumph.

There are three especially good girls' parts, Letty, Madge and Estelle, but the others have plenty to do. "Punch" Doolittle and George Washington Watts, a gentleman of color, are two particularly good comedy characters. We can strongly recommend "The New Co-Ed" to high schools and amateurs.

Price, 30 Cents.

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DOROTHY'S NEIGHBORS.

A brand new comedy in four acts, by Marie Doran, author of "The New Co-Ed," "Tempest and Sunshine," and many other successful plays. 4 males, 7 females. The scenes are extremely easy to arrange; two plain interiors and one exterior, a garden, or, if necessary, the two interiors will answer. Costumes modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

The story is about vocational training, a subject now widely discussed; also, the distribution of large wealth.

Back of the comedy situation and snappy dialogue there is good logic and a sound moral in this pretty play, which is worthy the attention of the experienced amateur. It is a clean, wholesome play, particularly suited to high school production. Price, 30 Cents.

MISS SOMEBODY ELSE.

A modern play in four acts by Marion Short, author of "The Touch-down," etc. 6 males, 10 females. Two interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

This delightful comedy has gripping dramatic moments, unusual character types, a striking and original plot and is essentially modern in theme and treatment. The story concerns the adventures of Constance Darcy, a multi-millionaire's young daughter. Constance embarks on a trip to find a young man who had been in her father's employ and had stolen a large sum of money. She almost succeeds, when suddenly all traces of the young man are lost. At this point she meets some old friends who are living in almost want and, in order to assist them through motives benevolent, she determines to sink her own aristocratic personality in that of a refined but humble little Irish waitress with the family that are in want. She not only carries her scheme to success in assisting the family, but finds romance and much tense and lively adventure during the period of her incognito, aside from capturing the young man who had defrauded her father. The story is full of bright comedy lines and dramatic situations and is highly recommended for amateur production. This is one of the best comedies we have ever offered with a large number of female characters. The dialogue is bright and the play is full of action from start to finish; not a dull moment in it. This is a great comedy for high schools and colleges, and the wholesome story will please the parents and teachers. We strongly recommend it.

Price, 30 Cents.

PURPLE AND FINE LINEN.

An exceptionally pretty comedy of Puritan New England, in three acts, by Amita B. Fairgrieve and Helena Miller. 9 male, 5 female characters.

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